



NEWS RELEASE

December 6, 2002

Joint Effort Yields 1,269 Pounds of Marijuana and 1 Suspect

U. S. Border Patrol, U. S. Customs and Roma PD Take Action

McALLEN, Texas – Chief Patrol Agent Jose E. Garza announces that Border Patrol Agents of the McAllen Sector seized 1,269 pounds of marijuana valued at \$1,015,200 last night after receiving information from the U. S. Customs Service. A single suspect was arrested with the assistance of the Roma Police Department.

December 5, the Rio Grande City Border Patrol Station received information from the U. S. Customs Service office in Falcon Heights regarding two vehicles suspected of transporting narcotics. At approximately 8:00 pm, U. S. Border Patrol Agents observed two vehicles matching the description given traveling eastbound on Highway 83 towards Roma. The two vehicles were described as Ford pickups. The two vehicles appeared to be traveling together when agents observed them. One was described as a Ford Ranger pickup followed by an older pickup, a Ford F-150.

Agents followed the vehicles and noticed that the older F-150 pickup had passed the Ranger pickup. Upon catching up to the pickups in question, the Ford Ranger pickup slowed down considerably and did not allow agents to pass them. Agents radioed ahead giving the description of the older pickup as a brown Ford F-150. Another Border Patrol unit intercepted the brown Ford F-150.

The intercepting Border Patrol unit engaged it's emergency lights and the brown Ford F-150 attempted to evade agents by turning north onto Lee Avenue from Highway 83 in Roma. The driver, 23-year-old United States citizen, lost control of the brown Ford F-150 while attempting to turn and crashed into the front of Pete's Auto Parts located at the intersection of Lee Avenue and Highway 83. The driver fled the scene, but was arrested moments later by Roma Police Officers and Border Patrol agents.

Once the scene was secured, agents discovered 231 bundles of marijuana wrapped in clear cellophane. The bundles weighed a total of 1,269 pounds and were valued at \$1,015,200. The driver, the marijuana, and the vehicle were turned over to the U. S. Customs Service. Ventura Cerda, Resident Agent in Charge of the U. S. Customs Service, advised that the driver was arraigned today, in McAllen Texas on narcotics charges.

The U. S. Border Patrol, the U. S. Customs Service and local law enforcement agencies continue to work close together in the war on drugs. Now more than ever interagency cooperation is important to the nation's security and the war against terrorism.

-USBP-

Note To News Media Representatives: Video is available.